

### § 204.33

32 U.S.C. 716, 5 U.S.C. 8346(b), or any other law.

#### § 204.33 Pre-offset notice.

A program official must provide an employee with written notice at least 30 calendar days prior to offsetting his/her salary. A program official need not notify an employee of adjustments to pay in connection with the employee's election of coverage or change in coverage under a Federal benefits program requiring periodic deductions from pay, if the amount to be recovered was accumulated over four pay periods or less. When required, the written notice must include the following:

(a) The nature, origin and amount of the indebtedness determined by the Commission to be due;

(b) The intention of the Commission to collect the debt through deductions from the employee's current disposable pay account;

(c) The amount, frequency, proposed beginning date, and duration of the intended deductions;

(d) An explanation of the Commission's policy concerning interest, penalties, and administrative costs, including a statement that such assessments must be made unless excused in accordance with the FCCS;

(e) The employee's right to inspect and copy Commission records relating to the debt (if copies of such records are not attached), or if the employee or his or her representative cannot personally inspect the records, the right to request and receive a copy of such records. The Commission will respond to a request for inspection and/or copying as soon as practicable;

(f) The opportunity, under terms agreeable to the Commission, to enter into a written agreement to establish a schedule for repayment in lieu of offset. The agreement must be in writing, signed by both the employee and the Commission, and documented in the Commission's files (4 CFR 102.2(e));

(g) The employee's right to a hearing conducted by an official arranged by the Commission if a petition is filed as prescribed by § 204.35, Petition for pre-offset hearing. Such hearing official will be either an administrative law judge or at the chief administrative law judge's discretion, another hearing

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official who is also not under the control of the head of the agency;

(h) The method and time period for petitioning for a hearing, including a statement that the timely filing of a petition for hearing will stay the commencement of collection proceedings;

(i) If a hearing is requested, the hearing official will issue a final decision, based on information presented to the hearing official, at the earliest practicable date, but no later than 60 days after the petition for the hearing is filed unless the employee requests and the hearing official, for good cause or in the interests of justice, deems it necessary to extend that time period (5 CFR 550.1104(d)(10));

(j) That any knowingly false or frivolous statements, representations, or evidence may subject the employee to:

(1) Disciplinary procedures appropriate under 5 U.S.C. chapter 75, 5 CFR part 752, or any other applicable statutes or regulations;

(2) Penalties under the False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. 3729-3731, or any other applicable statutory authority; and/or

(3) Criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. 286, 287, 1001, and 1002, or any other applicable statutory authority.

(k) Any other rights and remedies available to the employee under statutes or regulations governing the program for which the collection is being made;

(l) The employee's right to a prompt refund if amounts paid or deducted by salary offset are later waived or found not owed to the United States, unless otherwise provided by law or contract; and

(m) The specific address to which all correspondence shall be directed regarding the debt.

#### § 204.34 Employee response.

(a) *Introduction.* An employee must respond to a pre-offset notice, if at all, within 15 calendar days following receipt, in one or more of the ways discussed in § 204.34, Employee response, and § 204.35, Petition for pre-offset hearing. Where applicable, the employee bears the burdens of proof and persuasion.

(b) Responses must be submitted in writing to the program official who signed the pre-offset notice. A timely